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"Too fine to be true!" said another.

But the third said, "It's because it's true that it's fine. It has no other beauty, mind! And it's not because it's fine that it will come true. Fineness is not in vogue, any more than love is. It's because it's true that it has to be."

* * * * *

"They will say to you," growled a kneeling man who stooped with his two hands in the earth and shook his shoulders like a mastiff, "My friend, you have been a wonderful hero! I don't *want* them to say it!"

"Heroes? Some sort of extraordinary being? Idols? Rot! We've been murderers. We have respectably followed the trade of hangmen. We shall do it again with all our might, because it's of great importance to follow that trade, so as to punish war and smother it. The act of slaughter is always ignoble; sometimes necessary, but always ignoble. Yes, hard and persistent murderers, that's what we've been. But don't talk to me about military virtue because I've killed Germans."

"Nor to me," cried another in so loud a voice that no one could have replied to him even had he dared; "nor to me, because I've saved the lives of Frenchmen! Why, we might as well set fire to houses for the sake of the excellence of life-saving!"

"It would be a crime to exhibit the fine side of war, even if there were one!" murmured one of the somber soldiers.

The first man continued: "They'll say those things to us by way of paying us with glory, and to pay themselves, too, for what they haven't done. But military glory—it isn't even true for us common soldiers. It's for some, but outside those elect the soldier's glory is a lie, like every other fine-looking thing in war. In reality, the soldier's sacrifice is obscurely concealed. The multitudes that make up the waves of attack have no reward. They run to hurl themselves into a frightful, inglorious nothing. You cannot even heap up their names—their poor little names of nobodies."

* * * * *

The storm is falling more heavily on the expanse of flayed and martyred fields. The day is full of night. It is as if new enemy shapes of men and groups of men are rising unceasingly on the crest of the mountain-chain of clouds 'round about the barbaric outlines of crosses, eagles, churches, royal and military palaces and temples. They seem to multiply there, shutting out the stars that are fewer than mankind; it seems even as if these apparitions are moving in all directions in the excavated ground, here, there, among the real beings who are thrown there at random, half buried in the earth like grains of corn.

My still living companions have at last got up. Standing with difficulty on the foundered soil, enclosed in their bemired garb, laid out in strange upright coffins of mud, raising their huge simplicity out of the earth's depths—a profundity like that of ignorance—they move and cry out, with their gaze, their arms, and their fists extended towards the sky, whence fall daylight and storm. They are struggling against victorious specters, like the Cyranoes and Don Quixotes that they still are.

One sees their shadows stirring on the shining, sad expanse of the plain, and reflected in the pallid, stagnant surface of the old trenches, which now only the infinite

void of space inhabits and purifies, in the center of a polar desert whose horizons fume.

But their eyes are opened. They are beginning to make out the boundless simplicity of things. And Truth not only invests them with a dawn of hope, but raises on it a renewal of strength and courage.

"That's enough talk about those others!" one of the men commanded; "all the worse for them!—Us! Us all!" The understanding between democracies, the entente among the multitudes, the uplifting of the people of the world, the bluntly simple faith! All the rest, aye, all the rest, in the past, the present, and the future, matters nothing at all.

And a soldier ventures to add this sentence, though he begins it with lowered voice, "If the present war has advanced progress by one step, its miseries and slaughter will count for little."

* * * * *

And while we get ready to rejoin the others and begin war again, the dark and storm-choked sky slowly opens above our heads. Between two masses of gloomy cloud a tranquil gleam emerges; and that line of light, so black-edged and beset, brings even so its proof that the sun is there.

LENDING AID TO ENEMY ALIENS IN GREAT BRITAIN

By ANNA B. THOMAS

WHAT items of interest are there concerning the Friends' Emergency Committee for Helping Distressed Aliens that may be presented to American readers? I have been connected with the work of the committee since its formation in the first days of the war, and as I traverse in thought these three tragic years as they have presented themselves to our workers at St. Stephen's House,* my difficulty is, what to select from the stories that crowd to my memory. Where to begin? What to emphasize? What to omit?

It must be borne in mind that, owing to the short distance which separates London from the actual war zone and to the consequent liability of attack by German aeroplanes, fears for personal safety have played a large part in arousing a hostile spirit towards these aliens of enemy nationality that has rendered it extremely difficult for them to obtain employment, and that they have been surrounded by innumerable harassing and hampering restrictions.

Our first cases were emergency cases indeed. Young teachers who had been caught by the outbreak of war whilst attending a summer school at Oxford; a journalist and his English wife from Dresden, cut off from home and children whilst on a holiday visit to the wife's English relatives; waiter boys discharged by the hundred, and quickly rendered homeless and penniless in a hostile country; terrified Ruthenian peasants, whose summer jaunt to America for fruit-picking had ended in the capture of the ship on which they were returning to Austria—these were a few of the many who claimed our care

* This house has now been taken by the Government for the use of a Department. The Committee's present address is 14 Great Smith St., Westminster, London, S. W. 1.

and kept us very busy during the early weeks whilst we painfully learned the ropes and mastered the mysteries, as strange to the police as to ourselves, of getting our aliens registered and properly indexed and investigated.

In course of time our one room has become ten, and our departments have multiplied and our means of helping, too. We have steadily kept before us the aim of showing kindness and good will to our "enemies," and nearly always kindness and good will has been our reward.

We want to sow seeds of good will, which may bear fruit in future days and to form links which shall hereafter serve as a foundation base upon which the new world of co-operation and peaceful living between ourselves and Germany will have to be founded. We have many proofs that this is being done—in the letters that reach us from our protégés who have returned to their German homes; in notices of our work which have appeared in foreign journals, and in the constant correspondence that passes between our office and the committee which is working with similar aims in Berlin.

As the years have gone by our work has passed through varying phases. In early days one of our helpers, a young lady of American nationality, convoyed groups of German women and children to their homes and brought back most interesting greetings from pacifist friends of pre-war days. Then came the spy scares and the internment of the alien men. This involved the breaking up of unnumbered homes and bitter hardships for the women and children. Then was instituted the Department of Camp Visitation, and the attempts, more or less successful, to start industrial and educational work in the internment camps, and thus to lighten the lot of the men whose unoccupied days at first only offered unending leisure for brooding on their troubles and worrying over and about their wives and children. Soon we learned that Germany's policy was to treat her civilian aliens as nearly as possible as England was treating hers. Reprisals of good have been known, and prisoners in Ruhleben have thanked the English committee for indirectly helping them.

Meanwhile the forlorn state of wives and children struggling to exist upon the slender government allowances presented new problems to our committee. The sinking of the *Lusitania* and the air raids stirred up bitterness towards these miserable representatives of Germany, and at one time we had to open an emergency hostel for the people rendered homeless by the attacks of English mobs.

Then the children, suffering from under-feeding, and sometimes also from nerve shock—it required the full-time work of two helpers to arrange for children's hostels in town and country where the most delicate could be fed and cared for.

Again, clothes, and especially boots, presented a fearful problem. Generous parcels of clothing were sent us, and three rooms barely sufficed for all our stores and for the cutting out and giving out of a certain amount of regular sewing by which we strove to supplement the government grants.

A business committee was next established, to consider questions of unpaid debts, insurance policies, and the numerous problems that confront a woman whose

husband has been suddenly snatched from his business. This has proved an immense comfort and help.

Another important department of the work is that of helping the travelers who for one reason or another are going to Germany. The journey at the present time presents many difficulties. Often it is the English wife with a family of little children who is going. She is quite unaccustomed to travel, knows no word of German, and has never been outside England. She comes to our office and is taken charge of by our indefatigable "Traveling Secretary." All the details of the journey are explained, and she is helped in getting the necessary passports and permits. Her tickets, too, are supplied, and if she has to break up her home or dispose of furniture, etc., one of our helpers assists her in the task. When finally all the obstacles are overcome, our Traveling Secretary goes down on the same train to the port of embarkation, and there, from long experience and perfect knowledge of all officials at the custom-house, etc., smooths the path of the departing pilgrims, even to the supplying of sandwiches and coffee and milk for the children during the long night hours of waiting that have to be passed through, and so the last impression of England, "the enemy country," is of a cheery and kindly "good-bye"; and surely this is much more satisfactory than it would be to be sending off hundreds, nay, thousands, of embittered people filled with an angry sense of injustice.

For these same English wives and mothers a "Mothers' Rest Home" has been established through the kindness of some of our friends who have lent their own beautiful house of the committee "for the duration of the war." Here the poor women, often on the verge of collapse through worry and lack of proper food, are received and kept for weeks in pleasant, cheery surroundings, relieved of the unbearable strain and cheered and comforted by kindly ministrations. Their small children, who cannot be otherwise provided for, are cared for in the meantime in a special children's home provided by friends for the purpose.

I fear this letter has exceeded all reasonable bounds, yet I have not given you *one* detailed story from the more than five thousand cases that have come under our care. Many of them have equally in strangeness and in tragic interest the incidents of fiction, and throw a lurid light on the sufferings to which the ordinary commonplace individual is liable in wartime.

In closing, I may just remark that the more intimately one gets to know one's enemies, the more one comes to realize that by showing them love and kindness one actually does make hatred impossible, and my belief is that the "Friends' Emergency Committee" has done more to destroy German militarism than has so far been accomplished by all the forces of the Allies.

The demand on our funds is now as great as ever, and so far as we can see it must continue as long as the war does, whilst, when peace at length arrives, there will be thousands of ruined, desolated homes to be restored, and a still larger outlay will be needed.

We are very grateful for kind help received from America in the past, and would ask those who are interested in our work to send their contributions in care of John Way, 409 Chestnut street, Philadelphia, who will forward to us.